NUMB. XXVII.

The GUARDIAN.

Multa putans, ſortemque animo miſeratus iniquam. Virg.

Saturday, April 11. 1713.

IN Compaſſion to thoſe gloomy Mortals, who by their Unbelief are rendered incapable of feeling thoſe Impreſſions of Joy and Hope, which the Celebration of the late glorious Feſtival naturally leaves on the Mind of a Chriſtian, I ſhall in this Paper endeavour to evince that there are Grounds to expect a future State, without ſuppoſing in the Reader any Faith at all, not even the Belief of a Deity. Let the moſt ſtedfaſt Unbeliever open his Eyes, and take a Survey of the ſenſible World, and then ſay if there be not a Connexion, an Adjuſtment, an exact and conſtant Order diſcoverable in all the Parts of it. Whatever be the Cauſe, the thing it ſelf is evident to all our Faculties. Look into the Animal Syſtem, the Paſſions, Senſes, and locomotive Powers; is not the like Contrivance and Propriety obſervable in theſe too? Are they not fitted to certain Ends, and are they not by Nature directed to proper Objects?

Is it poſſible then that the ſmalleſt Bodies ſhould, by a Management ſuperiour to the Wit of Man, be diſpoſed in the moſt excellent manner agreeable to their reſpective Natures; and yet the Spirits or Souls of Men be neglected, or managed by ſuch Rules as fall ſhort of Man's Underſtanding? Shall every other Paſſion be rightly placed by Nature, and ſhall that Appetite of Immortality natural to all Mankind be alone miſplaced, or deſigned to be fruſtrated? Shall the induſtrious Application of the inferior Animal Powers in the meaneſt Vocations be anſwered by the Ends we propoſe, and ſhall not the generous Efforts of a virtuous Mind be rewarded? In a Word, Shall the Corporeal World be all Order and Harmony, the Intellectual Diſcord and Confuſion? He who is Bigot enough to believe theſe things, muſt bid adieu to that natural Rule, of *Reaſoning from Analogy*; muſt run counter to that Maxim of common Senſe, *That Men ought to form their Judgments of things unexperienced from what they have experienced.*

If any thing looks like a Recompence of calamitous Virtue on this Side the Grave, it is either an Aſſurance that thereby we obtain the Favour and Protection of Heaven, and ſhall, whatever befals us in this, in another Life meet with a juſt Return; or elſe that Applauſe and Reputation, which is thought to attend virtuous Actions. The former of theſe our *Free-Thinkers*, out of their ſingular Wiſdom and Benevolence to Mankind, endeavour to eraſe from the Minds of Men. The latter can never be juſtly diſtributed in this Life, where ſo many ill Actions are reputable, and ſo many good Actions diſeſteemed or miſinterpreted; where ſubtle Hypocriſy is placed in the moſt engaging Light, and modeſt Virtue lies concealed; where the Heart and the Soul are hid from the Eyes of Men, and the Eyes of Men are dimmed and vitiated. *Plato*'s Senſe in relation to this Point is contained in his *Gorgias*, where he introduces *Socrates* ſpeaking after this manner.

'It was in the Reign of *Saturn* provided by a 'Law, which the Gods have ſince continued down 'to this time, That they who had lived virtuouſly 'and piouſly upon Earth, ſhould after Death enjoy 'a Life full of Happineſs, in certain Iſlands appointed for the Habitation of the Bleſſed: But 'that ſuch as had lived wickedly ſhould go into the 'Recep-

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'Receptacle of Damned Souls, named *Tartarus*, 'there to ſuffer the Puniſhments they deſerved. 'But in all the Reign of *Saturn*, and in the Be'ginning of the Reign of *Jove*, living Judges were 'appointed, by whom each Perſon was judged 'in his Life-time, in the ſame Day on which he 'was to die. The Conſequence of which was that 'they often paſſed wrong Judgments. *Pluto*, there'fore, who preſided in *Tartarus*, and the Guardians 'of the Bleſſed Iſlands, finding that on either ſide 'many unfit Perſons were ſent to their reſpective 'Dominions, complain'd to *Jove*, who promiſed to 'redreſs the Evil. He added, the reaſon of theſe 'unjuſt Proceedings are that Men are judged in the 'Body. Hence many conceal the Blemiſhes and 'Imperfections of their Minds by Beauty, Birth 'and Riches; not to mention, that at the time of 'Tryal there are Crowds of Witneſſes to atteſt their 'having lived well. Theſe things miſlead the 'Judges, who being themſelves alſo of the number 'of the Living, are ſurrounded each with his own 'Body, as with a Veil thrown over his Mind. For 'the future, therefore, it is my Intention that Men 'do not come on their Tryal till after Death, 'when they ſhall appear before the Judge, 'diſrobed of all their Corporeal Ornaments. The 'Judge himſelf too ſhall be a pure unveiled Spirit, 'beholding the very Soul, the naked Soul of the 'Party before him. With this View I have already 'conſtituted my Sons, *Minos* and *Rhadamanthus*, 'Judges, who are Natives of *Aſia*; and *Æacus*, 'a Native of *Europe*. Theſe, after Death, ſhall 'hold their Court in a certain Meadow, from which 'there are two Roads, leading the one to *Tartarus*, 'the other to the Iſlands of *the Bleſſed*.

From this, as from numberleſs other Paſſages of his Writings, may be ſeen *Plato*'s Opinion of a future State. A thing therefore in regard to us ſo comfortable, in it ſelf ſo juſt and excellent, a thing ſo agreeable to the Analogy of Nature, and ſo univerſally credited by all Orders and Ranks of Men, of all Nations and Ages, what is it that ſhould move a few Men to reject? Surely there muſt be ſomething of prejudice in the caſe. I appeal to the ſecret Thoughts of a *Free-thinker*, if he does not argue within himſelf after this manner: The Senſes and Faculties I enjoy at preſent are viſibly deſigned to repair, or preſerve the Body from the Injuries it is liable to in its preſent Circumſtances. But in an Eternal State, where no Decays are to be repaired, no outward Injuries to be fenced againſt, where there are no Fleſh and Bones, Nerves or Blood-Veſſels, there will certainly be none of the Senſes; and that there ſhould be a State of Life without the Senſes is inconceivable?

But as this manner of Reaſoning proceeds from a Poverty of Imagination, and Narrowneſs of Soul in thoſe that uſe it, I ſhall endeavor to remedy thoſe defects, and open their Views, by laying before them a caſe which, being naturally poſſible, may perhaps reconcile them to the belief of what is ſupernaturally reveal'd.

Let us ſuppoſe a Perſon blind and deaf from his Birth, who being grown to Man's Eſtate, is by the Dead Palſie, or ſome other Cauſe, deprived of his Feeling, Taſting, and Smelling; and at the ſame time has the impediment of his Hearing removed, and the Film taken from his Eyes: What the five Senſes are to us, that the Touch, Taſte and Smell were to him. And any other ways of Perception of a more refined and extenſive Nature were to him as inconceivable, as to us thoſe are which will one Day be adapted to perceive thoſe things which *Eye hath not ſeen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it entered into the Heart of Man to conceive.* And it would be juſt as reaſonable in him to conclude, that the loſs of thoſe three Senſes could not poſſibly be ſucceeded by any new Inlets of Perception; as in a Modern *Free-thinker* to imagine there can be no State of Life and Perception without the Senſes he enjoys at preſent. Let us further ſuppoſe the ſame Perſon's Eyes, at their firſt opening, to be ſtruck with a great variety of the moſt gay and pleaſing Objects, and his Ears with a melodious Conſort of Vocal and Inſtrumental Muſick; Behold him amazed, raviſhed, tranſported; and you have ſome diſtant Repreſentation, ſome faint and glimmering Idea of the extatic State of the Soul in that Article in which ſhe emerges from this Sepulchre of Fleſh into Life and Immortality.

N. B. *It has been obſerved by the Chriſtians, that a certain ingenious Foreigner, who has publiſhed many exemplary Jeſts for the uſe of Perſons in the Article of Death, was very much out of Humour in a late Fit of Sickneſs till he was in a fair way of Recovery.*

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